

In the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph at **pag 3, lines 1 to 17**, as follows:

For flow-technical reasons, e.g. to increase the operating efficiency of the vacuum cleaner by minimizing the air flow resistance, vacuum cleaner designs strive to provide the largest possible cross-sectional area of the exhaust channel and especially the exhaust outlet openings in the area of the housing of the vacuum cleaner, in order to thereby achieve a small exhaust flow resistance. However, contrary to these requirements, it is also desired to reduce the noise emissions as discussed above, which could be achieved by providing a relatively large air flow resistance. Thus, these two requirements, of efficient operation through a reduced flow resistance on the one hand, and reduced noise emissions through an increased flow resistance on the other hand, are directly opposed to each other. ~~Prior art vacuum cleaner designs have as yet not been able to satisfactorily achieve both of these opposite goals, or even a satisfactory balancing of these two opposing goals.~~

Please replace the paragraph at **page 3, lines 18 to 24**, with clean non-fax text as follows:

European Patent Publication EP 0,706,774 B discloses an attempt to improve on the above mentioned relationship or balancing between the two opposite goals. Particularly, this European Publication suggests to increase the outlet cross-sectional area through corresponding covered openings

in the form of slots in the side walls of the housing of the vacuum cleaner in the manner of a protective shroud.

**[AMENDMENT CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE]**